

SECTION 7

EARLY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC MEETINGS

7.1 Early Coordination

Scoping meetings were held September 20, 2000 in Lansing and Ortonville for agencies and local entities, respectively. Prior to the meeting a scoping packet was mailed to those invited. A listing of those invited, those who attended and those who responded to scoping materials is found in Appendix C. Pertinent correspondence received by MDOT is also included in Appendix C, as are minutes of the scoping meetings.

Comments received from federal and state agencies in response to early coordination as listed below.

7.1.1 Federal Agencies

- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – noted no records of federally-listed species and called for a detailed conceptual, comprehensive wetland habitat mitigation plan.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – concurred with the need for the project and called for: 1) a clear statement of purpose and need; 2) a detailed discussion of the selected alternatives; 3) a section describing the affected environment; 4) a description of direct and indirect wetland impacts and other impacts; 5) a description of stormwater runoff; 6) mitigation for unavoidable wetland losses; and, 7) mitigation strategies for other impacts.

7.1.2 State Agencies

- Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division – noted the potential presence of a state-listed rattlesnake (Michigan Natural Features Inventory list). A later letter added the Poweshiek Skipper and Blazing Star Borer. It also noted that a statement of “No Effect” will be needed before work on this project begins and states how this requirement can be met.
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Surface Water Quality Division – noted concern for soil erosion and sedimentation, water flow volumes, and pollutant impacts of discharges of construction activities.
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Land and Water Management Division – noted: 1) a purpose and need statement needed to be developed; 2) a four-lane typical section should be evaluated to minimize wetland impacts; 3) other design elements should be considered to minimize impacts and stipulated several points regarding wetland mitigation; 4) impacts to a fen wetland area noted during scoping should be minimized; 5) replacement structures must be evaluated hydraulically; 6) several recommended design elements of new or replacement structures; and, 7) copies of the environmental document should be forwarded to MDEQ’s Environmental Response Division and the Storage Tank Division.
- Michigan Department of State, State Historic Preservation Office – concurrence with the Area of Potential Effects (APE) and the recommendations regarding *National Register* eligible properties.

7.2 Public Meetings

Many meetings were held during the course of the study to solicit information from the public, interested groups and agencies. The study has been guided by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of a number of disciplines within MDOT. An Advisory Committee comprised of local elected officials, representatives of community-based organizations and businesses and interested local citizens also provided significant input. Finally, the public was directly involved at all stages, with six rounds of meetings prior to the public hearing.

- June 7 & 8, 2000 – Kickoff meeting to introduce the project, discuss the schedule, and solicit initial ideas regarding solutions. Independence Township Library, Village of Ortonville Board Room, and Lions Club. (Total attendance 52.)
- August 24, 2000 – Open house display of information on illustrative alternatives and traffic projections. Brandon Township “Old Town Hall.” (Total attendance 103.)
- October 25, 2000 – Presentation of the results of the evaluation of the illustrative alternatives. Brandon Township “Old Town Hall” and Goodrich High School Cafetorium. (Total attendance 282.)
- November 15, 2000 – Meeting devoted to historic resources, both to inform citizens about process, make them aware of known resources and solicit their comments. Brandon Township “Old Town Hall.” (Total attendance 34.)
- January 24, 2001 – Workshop/Open house display of information on the practical alternatives. Lakeview Community Church. (Total attendance 229.)
- April 3 & 4, 2001 - Presentation of the results of the evaluation of the practical alternatives. Brandon Township Middle School and Goodrich High School Cafetorium. (Total attendance 350.)

The typical pattern for each round of meetings was an Advisory Committee meeting midday or early afternoon, one or two public meetings that afternoon and evening, or another the next day. Meetings were held throughout the corridor. There was a free flow of information at all meetings. Generally, a brief presentation was provided, followed by questions/answers and discussion. Graphics were present at all meetings to allow informed discussions. Attendance for any given round of meetings ranged from 30 individuals to over 300, with average attendance about 150 persons. Attendance was encouraged by means of notices mailed about two weeks in advance of the meetings. A toll-free phone number (1.800.900.2649) was available to sign up for mailings and to make any comments. Almost 1500 names are on the mailing list. A log of email (the email address is www.mdot.state.mi.us/m15) and other correspondence was kept during the course of the project. Emails (118 received through mid-August) and correspondence were responded to promptly. Local officials were visited numerous times to understand the interests and concerns of their constituents.

Logs of email and phone calls are on file at MDOT.

Following availability of this Draft EIS for review by the public and federal, state and local agencies, a public hearing will be held.